

New England feeling more like the South?

On a N.H. mountaintop, dire warnings on global warming

By JOHN CURRAN
Associated Press

FRANCONIA, N.H. Milder winters and ho-hum foliage. Lousy ski conditions and curtailed logging operations. "Hundred-year floods" that occur every couple of years and weather patterns that make north woods feel like South Carolina.

Convening on a mountaintop for a summit on climate change, a congressional committee heard dire warnings yesterday about the impact of global warming on New England's way of life.

"Unless you want to buy your maple syrup on your fall foliage tour of Canada, we need some action," said Timothy Perkins, director of the University of Vermont's Proctor Maple Research Center.

The U.S. House's Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming hearing was held atop 4,180-foot Cannon Mountain, requiring all to ride an aerial tram to the lodge where it was held.

Five witnesses implored Congress to take steps to address global warming before it melts the region's winter sports economy, causes "forest

migration" and wallops an economy built up around tourism.

Over the past 31 years, annual snowfall has dropped as much as 30 inches across New England, with a bigger percentage of precipitation falling as rain, according to Cameron Wake of the University of New Hampshire's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans and Space.

There are 15 to 25 fewer days with snow on the ground each winter, and rivers and lakes ice over later and thaw earlier, Wake said.

"This is not climate change of the future. This is already happening," he told the panel.

Outdoorsman Bill Koury said the damage is there for all to see.

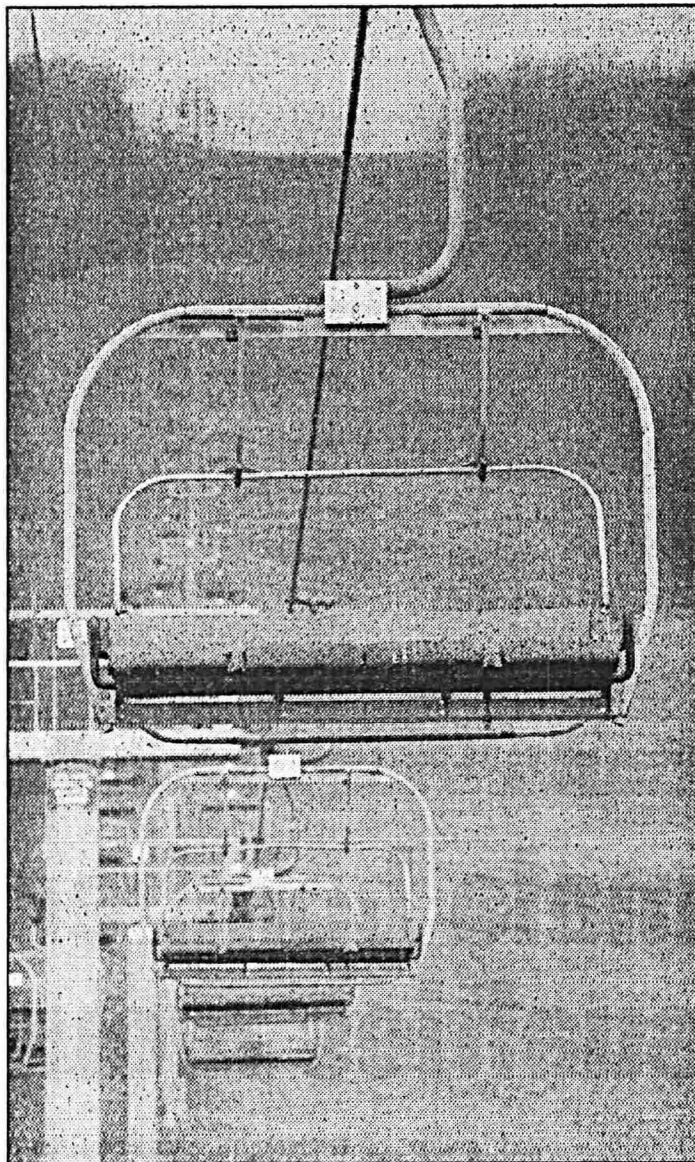
Ticks are active later in the season for lack of cold, turkey vultures — which once ventured no further north than Connecticut — are now a common sight and

bluefish are making their way into Maine and New Hampshire waters, he said. "I'm not a scientist, and these are subjective observations," said Koury, 64, of Atkinson. "But I think the term 'global warming' doesn't do justice to the changes that are occurring."

"We already know that if we don't cut global warming pollution, we may need to rename Glacier National Park because one day there may be no glaciers," said U.S. Rep. Ed Markey, the Massachusetts Democrat who chairs the panel. "Now, it appears we may also have to one day rename the White Mountains, because there may be no snow."

■ Rainfall prognosis
for the next century
is gloomy PAGE 17





File photo

Ski areas like Sugarbush in Vermont opened later than usual last year because of warmer than normal weather.